

To: Education Committee

Please oppose the section of HB6357 which proposes adding the Healthy Foods Initiative as a new CIA funded program. The Healthy Foods Initiative should be funded as a stand-alone line item under the Department of Education budget.

The CIA contributes to Lyme's economy and quality of life by supporting land conservation, farmland preservation, historic properties, and affordable housing projects.

Since 2006, some 2000 jobs have been created in the affordable housing and historic preservation sectors due to CIA projects, including jobs for construction workers, architects, engineers, historic consultants, plumbers, electricians, masons, and jobs in the tourism industry.

The \$873 million outdoor recreation industry and the \$3.5 billion dollar agricultural industry, which together generate 28,000 jobs, is strengthened by CIA investments in local farm businesses and land protection.

157 dairy farm businesses were saved with CIA support payments.

The diversion of these funds to other programs, no matter how worthy, threatens the level and integrity of the funds available for the programs for which it was created and sets a very dangerous precedent for future dilution of the fund. Please preserve the CIA funds for the purposes they were originally designated - open space preservation, farmland preservation/dairy support, historic properties preservation, and affordable housing.

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